



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023  
TEL: (207) 624-6616

March 9, 2017

Governor Paul R. LePage  
One State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0001

Dear Governor LePage:

Pursuant to our statutory duties under 20-A MRSA Section 251(1), the State Board of Education met with and interviewed your candidate for Commissioner of Education, Robert G. Hasson, Jr. in executive session at a special meeting on March 3, 2017.

The Board enthusiastically supports Dr. Hasson for the position. Bob is eminently qualified to be Maine's Commissioner of Education. As you know, he has served in numerous positions in public education from teacher to leadership positions, including as a Principal, a Superintendent and most recently the Acting Commissioner of Education. He is well respected by those in the field, as he is by those in the Department of Education.

When asked to describe his leadership style, he said it was collaborative and cooperative while being definitive with integrity. He is willing to listen to those who have opposing views and welcomes constructive criticism. However, he is able to make decisions which will be necessary to move public pre-K to 12 education forward. He wants to move quickly but methodically. He is particularly focused on helping students in disadvantaged situations to achieve at the highest levels. He has already put in place the Momentum program to assist students in literacy and hopes to be able to establish a program for mathematics as well. He plans to bring career and technical education to high school freshmen and sophomores, and even to middle school students. He knows the value of investing in quality teachers and the need for equity across our state. He values the types of data that can be helpful to improve instruction and student achievement.

When he began as Director of the Department's certification team, his entry plan was to talk with everyone on staff and force himself to listen. He did the same as Acting Commissioner of the Department. He interviewed thirty-five staff members and asked everyone to describe his/her job, the barriers and what could be done to support each person. This is an excellent way to build a team. He always cautions himself to not go too far up the assumption ladder. He will seek the advice and assistance of those who have strengths in areas he feels he doesn't have; an example being contracts.

He is a strong supporter of rigorous standards. He believes that proficiency can be demonstrated in a variety of ways and believes that real learning can occur any time and any place and is seeking ways to allow all students to experience real life situations.

The Board looks forward to working closely with Dr. Hasson for the next two years (and perhaps beyond). He will make an outstanding Commissioner. He has the background, skills, and leadership style to move our state forward in this era of mandates from the state and the federal government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Martha J. Harris".

Martha J. Harris, Chair  
Maine State Board of Education

cc: John McGough, Office of the Governor  
Aaron Chadbourne, Senior Policy Advisor